Delivering Results for Children 2019 - Programme of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and UNICEF

Dear UNICEF partners,

We began 2019 by hosting the High-Level Forum on ‘Realizing Myanmar’s Development Vision for Every Child’, opened by H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor, and the UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore. The forum provided a platform for reaffirming the Government of Myanmar’s commitment to put children first in the country’s development agenda.

In July, the Government of Myanmar enacted the Child Rights Law, a landmark milestone for children as it brought Myanmar’s legislation more in line with international standards and conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Under the new law, all children born in Myanmar are guaranteed the fundamental and unconditional right to register at birth. With the establishment of a minimum age of marriage (18 years) and employment (14 years), the value and vulnerabilities of childhood are recognized. This helps to let children be children. All forms of violence against children are prohibited. This was further strengthened in October when Myanmar ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

The 30th anniversary of the CRC was celebrated later in the year, bringing together parliamentarians, senior Government officials, civil society and UN partners with children and youth from all walks of life—including street children, children from IDP camps, and university students. Together they discussed childhood and their vision for it, and voted, Myanmar’s Got Talent-style, on initiatives to strengthen participation by children and youth, and have their voices heard by policy makers.

A major escalation of conflict at the beginning of 2019 between the Myanmar military (known as the Tatmadaw), and the Arakan Army displaced around 45,000 people, mainly ethnic Rakhine, exacerbating the challenges around access to populations in need. More progress is needed in establishing conditions that would allow the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of the refugees currently in Bangladesh, who demand that fundamental rights be addressed, including citizenship and freedom of movement, both of which have a knock-on effect for livelihoods, education, and access to health and other essential services.

A unilateral ceasefire declared by the Myanmar Armed Forces between December 2018 and 21 September 2019, excluding the fighting in Rakhine State, led to a notable decrease in incidents in Kachin and Shan States. However, the ceasefire was not extended, and episodic fighting continues to take place. Both the Myanmar military and several ethnic armed groups remain listed in the Secretary General’s Report on Children and Armed Conflict. Providing humanitarian response in all three conflict-affected locations continues to be challenging due to restrictions on access and the fluid and temporary nature of some of the displacements.

Despite these challenges, significant results were achieved for children in 2019.

UNICEF continued to provide technical support for the roll-out of the national Maternal and Child Cash Transfer programme. This flagship social protection programme provides a monthly cash benefit to pregnant women and children up to two years of age. In 2019, the programme benefitted over 200,000 people and now operates in five areas: Chin, Rakhine, Naga self-administered area, Kayin and Kayah States. More than 300,000 children in all primary schools and other forms of learning centres, such as temporary learning centres, monastic schools and non-formal primary education centres, received story books and picture dictionaries to support their reading skills development.

On the humanitarian front, UNICEF provided access to basic health services to over 128,000 women and children, that is 20,000 more than in 2018, including some extremely vulnerable populations in hard to reach areas. At the same time UNICEF increased its ability to identify and treat children six to 59 months with
severe acute malnutrition in 2019, up 54 per cent from 2018. UNICEF’s WASH programme provided over 130,000 people with access to safe drinking and domestic water (53% more than 2018) as well as hygiene supplies to nearly 460,000 people, while UNICEF’s education in emergencies activities expanded to reach an additional 18,695 children in 2019.

UNICEF’s engagement in the three conflict-affected states went beyond humanitarian response and included key initiatives that help build a foundation for longer-term development, as well as build bridges among the affected communities. One example is the new Education initiative in Rakhine State, “Learning Together”, which was launched in mid-2019 with DFID funding support, aimed at encouraging children to learn and contribute to an inclusive environment through educational activities. In 2020, the initiative will reach 40,000 children in 163 schools.

An exciting, innovative project developed during the year, initiated with a generous donation from the Shenzhen World Health Foundation, is the ‘Banana Bag’, which doubles as a play mat and contains items to promote and support good nutrition practices. This initiative focuses on the period following the first six-months of exclusive breast feeding, when complementary feeding is introduced. The ‘Banana Bag’ prototypes designed and piloted will now be refined and prepared for production and distribution later in 2020.

In partnership with Telenor, UNICEF supported the introduction of electronic Vital Registration, with frontline health staff using tablets to register births and deaths. Piloted in Mon State, this technology allows for faster, more secure registrations and more children are reached and included.

Finally, identifying priority indicators for children provides a basis for monitoring and is a key part of the National Indicator Framework linked to the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030. UNICEF continues to support the strengthening of national and sub-national systems to produce data and generate evidence on the situation of children in Myanmar. This reinforces equitable progress and the measurement of results moving towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

UNICEF is deeply thankful to our partners, including private and public donors, and we look forward to continuing and strengthening the partnerships. Through working together, we can achieve results for children and realise our shared goals of working for and with children in Myanmar, improving their lives and prospects for a more peaceful and prosperous future.

June Kunugi
UNICEF Representative to Myanmar
Improving the lives of children in their communities

Results 2019: Quick facts and figures

- Nationwide supplementary immunization campaign reached 3.5 million children with the Measles and Rubella vaccine and 1.5 million children with Polio-MR vaccines.
- The Infant and Young Child Feeding programme reached 12,923 children and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition reached 1,352 children.
- Over 7,000 out-of-school children in 81 townships gained access to non-formal primary education and non-formal middle school education pilot programmes.
- A set of 10 bilingual storybooks written in Myanmar and 25 ethnic languages was distributed to 415,000 children aged three to five years.
- 43,891 children in 356 schools and eight health centres were able to access basic water and sanitation facilities.
- Provided 23,000 portable drinking water quality test kits.
- 24 children were placed in the foster care system, with 30 per cent of these children aged under three years.
- 200,000 pregnant women and children up to two years of age in five areas benefitted from the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer monthly payments.
- 130,000 children were reached through birth registration campaigns and the piloting of the Birth and Death Registration in Mon State.
- Over 7,000 out-of-school children in 81 townships gained access to non-formal primary education and non-formal middle school education pilot programmes.
Improving the lives of children in their communities

In 2019, UNICEF and its partners supported the delivery of services focusing on the development of children and adolescents, applying an holistic life-cycle approach and expanding into hard to reach areas. Key results include:

HEALTH AND NUTRITION:
In collaboration with the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health and the Myanmar Paediatric Society, UNICEF supported 21 district hospitals in quality newborn care to achieve 42 per cent reduction in newborn mortality among admitted children.

Extensive collaboration among UNICEF, WHO, the Ministry of Health and Sports and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, a nationwide supplementary immunization campaign reached 3.5 million children with the Measles and Rubella vaccine and 1.5 million children with Polio-MR vaccines.

With the Ministry of Health and Sports, UNICEF supported the scale-up of Infant and Young Child Feeding and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition programmes for children under the age of five. The Infant and Young Child Feeding programme reached 12,923 children and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition reached 1,352 children.

Following the successful 2018 multi-media campaign on exclusive breastfeeding, UNICEF continued supporting the Ministry of Health and Sports to integrate the campaign into the annual nutrition promotion month in August 2019, reaching an estimated 54,000 caregivers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT:
UNICEF supported the development of the new pre-service training package for early childhood development practitioners; the production of 30,500 set of early literacy materials to be made available for children from 25 ethnic communities and the pilot service for developmental screening for early childhood development delays and/or disabilities in young children under the age of five was initiated in seven sites of 4 states and regions benefiting over 4,800 children.

EDUCATION:
A set of 10 bilingual storybooks written in Myanmar and 25 ethnic languages was distributed to 415,000 children aged three to five years.

Benefitting over 20,000 children, materials were developed and written in 25 different ethnic languages for the local school curricula in Mon, Kayin, Kachin, Kayah and Chin States.

Over 7,000 out-of-school children in 81 pilot townships gained access to non-formal primary education and non-formal middle school education pilot programmes.

The Leave No Child Behind, a pilot student participation initiative aiming to keep adolescent students in schools and equip them with relevant and useful 21st century skills, revitalized school-based student clubs and reached 23,473 students and 432 teachers in 177 secondary schools.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
Over 200 communities were declared Open Defecation Free and UNICEF supported 173,678 people to access basic sanitation.

43,891 children in 356 schools and eight health centres were able to access basic water and sanitation facilities including menstrual hygiene management facilities in 135 schools reaching an estimated 10,186 girls.

More than 1,401 communities are implementing handwashing behaviour change programmes.

Water User Committees formed in 97 villages comprise 838 committee members, of which 48 per cent are women.
The construction and rehabilitation of 97 community-managed household water meter systems reached 75,277 people.

UNICEF provided 23,000 portable drinking water quality test kits to the Department of Public Health, for use at the household level.

**CHILD PROTECTION:**
76 foster families were trained in accordance with the approved procedures and the Myanmar government approved 38 foster families.

24 children were placed in the foster care system, with 30 per cent of these children aged under three years.

Following foster case arrangement, nine children were successfully reintegrated back into their families.

**SOCIAL PROTECTION:**
200,000 pregnant women and children up to two years of age in five areas (Chin, Rakhine, Naga self-administered area, Kayin, and Kayah States) benefitted from the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer monthly payments.

130,000 children were reached through birth registration campaigns and the piloting of the Birth and Death Registration in Mon State.

A pilot programme for certification and registration of persons with disabilities was launched.
Rising to humanitarian challenges
Results 2019: Quick facts and figures

86,491 children and women from conflict-affected areas received health, immunization and emergency referral support services

5,769 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition, were treated in out-patient programmes

Child Protection in Emergencies programme reached approximately 36,367 children

69,788 children (32,453 boys and 37,335 girls) were reached with Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

More than 61,000 (48 per cent girls) children affected by conflict were supported to continue their education

UNICEF reached 459,344 people with humanitarian WASH responses
UNICEF’s humanitarian programmes in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan States, with assistance provided as needed in Chin and Kayin States, are administered through implementing organizations. In 2019, significant results were achieved despite the challenges of growing humanitarian needs, substantial cost increases, limited funding and constricted access.

**HEALTH AND NUTRITION:**
86,491 children and women from conflict-affected areas received health, immunization and emergency referral support services.  
5,769 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition, almost double that of 2018, were treated in out-patient programmes run by humanitarian partners and government health centres.  
26,963 mothers were reached with Infant and Young Child Feeding counselling by government health staff and implementing humanitarian partners.

**CHILD PROTECTION:**
Fifty-nine children and youth were released from the Myanmar Army, and registered for reintegration, which includes psychosocial support, case management services and life skills interventions provided to build key protective skills and resilience. This brings the total number released since the signing of the Action Plan in June 2012 to 983.

Across Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States, the Child Protection in Emergencies programme reached approximately 36,367 children, 16,810 girls and 19,557 boys.

More than 105,379 people including 69,788 children (32,453 boys and 37,335 girls) were reached with Explosive Ordnance Risk Education.

**EDUCATION:**
More than 61,000 (48 per cent girls) children affected by conflict were supported to continue their education in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP), government schools and non-formal education set-ups.

To amplify children’s voices, UNICEF supported the participation of children in the production of participatory videos to share lived experiences of the barriers preventing children from accessing and fully participating in school. The tools brought together crowds in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States through public screenings, followed by dialogue and debate over the roles of leaders and community members in supporting children’s education.

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:**
UNICEF reached 459,344 people with humanitarian WASH responses through CSOs, government and direct implementation.

UNICEF and the WASH Cluster provided capacity building support to key government partners, thereby contributing to effective preparedness and timely and efficient humanitarian action.
Making the reforms work for children

Reforms represent a unique opportunity to generate new, at scale, results for children. In 2019, UNICEF supported the following key policy and legislative advances for children in Myanmar.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION:
UNICEF continued its collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports and Alive and Thrive, on improving and standardising the national guidelines and Standard Operation Procedures for Human Milk Banks to improve conditions for newborns with complications. UNICEF also worked with the Ministry of Health and Sports, Alive and Thrive, and the Ministry of Labour to establish guidelines and toolkits for lactation support in workplace for mothers in the public and private sectors.

EDUCATION:
The first Alternative Education Sub-sector Framework was finalized and launched, with UNICEF’s support. An evidence-informed national framework for equitable Continuous Professional Development for basic education teachers was developed and disseminated. The process involved teachers in the remotest locations and seven partner agencies.

CHILD PROTECTION:
The medium-term Costed Sector Plan for Social Protection (CSPSP) was developed, supported by UNICEF. The Government of Myanmar, with UNICEF’s support, launched the process for developing a national Child Protection Policy and for developing Rules and Procedures for the recently enacted Child Rights Law. UNICEF supported the drafting of the integrated case management Standard Operating Procedure, bringing in both development and humanitarian actors involved in child protection and gender-based violence case management.

SOCIAL PROTECTION:
UNICEF supported the development of the Costed Sector Plan for Social Protection in Myanmar, to strengthen child-sensitivity in social protection systems. A process to develop the National Strategic Plan for mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was initiated.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
Building on the successes and further scaling up of the elimination of open defecation initiative, UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Sports to draft the National Rural Sanitation Policy and Costed Implementation Plan.
HEALTH AND NUTRITION:
UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Sports to strengthen the functionality of the Child Death Surveillance and Response and the Maternal Death Surveillance and Response systems, contributing to improved reporting of up to 15 per cent by frontline health workers on maternal, newborn and under-five deaths.

The electronic patient management and record system for clinical management of HIV-infected children and adults reached more than 110 treatment sites contributing to improved treatment outcomes.

UNICEF contributed to the improvement of health workers’ capacity and government leadership in providing the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV services in 326 of the total 330 townships, expanding its reach to very hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas.


UNICEF continued to build the capacity of basic health staff to provide essential nutrition services such as Infant and Young Child Feeding counselling, where 60 per cent of health workers in targeted states and regions are now providing Infant and Young Child Feeding support according to national guidelines.

EDUCATION:
Continuous professional development for over 24,000 teachers and head teachers was supported by UNICEF through School-based In-service Teacher Education (SITE), Child Friendly Schools (CFS) teacher training and head teacher training.

The National Competency Framework for head teachers and sub-national education officers was endorsed, budgeted and disseminated by the Ministry of Education, with more than 300 head teachers and education officers thus far receiving orientation.

CHILD PROTECTION:
Myanmar participated in the ASEAN-led End Violence Against Children campaign with over 100 participants from government bodies and NGOs participating in a mid-term review of the regional action plan.

Training of 230 social workers from the Department of Social Welfare, 300 medical social workers from the Department of Medical Services and over 100 NGO frontline workers was supported by UNICEF.

Over 50 community-based groups developed plans for preventing and responding to child protection issues in their villages, focusing on raising awareness of child protection, identifying cases, referring incidents/cases and responding to the child protection cases.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
In partnership with WaterAid, UNICEF introduced a mobile application in six townships in Southern Shan State and Magwe Region. The App compiles and analyses village level sanitation data used in producing baseline reports.
SOCIAL PROTECTION:
Together with the Department of Social Welfare, UNICEF conducted gender-mainstreaming training for 50 frontline workers from civil society organizations, faith-based organizations and staff from the Department of Social Welfare.

For more inclusive social protection, UNICEF supported a training of trainers for more than 180 participants in the three pilot areas of Kayin State and Yangon and Bago Region, to initiate the registration and certification process for persons with disabilities.
Evidence is vital for better understanding the situation of children and helping to find ways to improve their lives, and guide action for children.

In 2019, UNICEF contributed to strengthening systems to generate high-quality data on the children of Myanmar and support the implementation of the recommendations in the Myanmar SDGs Action Plan for Children Report. UNICEF supported the launch of the Poverty Report - Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017. Other main undertakings by UNICEF in 2019 included the following:

**EDUCATION:**
Supporting the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning and Finance to develop the *Education Budget Brief* which will inform equity-based education planning and budgeting.

Reforming student assessment, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Matrix initiative conducted its first survey in January 2019, covering 5,715 students from 202 schools. As a result, teachers increased their knowledge of the Grade Five exam and raised their awareness of child-centred assessment, in line with the Ministry of Education-approved National Assessment Policy and curriculum reform.

**CHILD PROTECTION:**
Designing evidence-generating exercises on social dynamics, behavioural patterns and locally relevant pathways to change. These relate to prevention of and response to violence against children and gender-based violence with particular focus on adolescents in crisis situations in Myanmar.

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:**
Working closely with the Department of Rural Development, the Department of Public Health and the Central Statistics Organization to include WASH indicators which are fully aligned with SDG indicators in the National Indicator Framework of the Myanmar Sustainability Development Plan (2018-2030).

**HEALTH AND NUTRITION:**
Collaborating with WFP and the Ministry of Health and Sports to conduct the Status and Determinants of Food Security and Undernutrition urban food and nutrition survey in 14 townships of Yangon.

Supporting the national Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Technical Strategic Group to review the implementation status of key programmes in the most recent five-year national strategy.

**SOCIAL PROTECTION:**
Evaluating the initial phase of the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer programme in Chin and Rakhine States to produce lessons learnt and inform the planned national scale-up of the programme.
UNICEF field offices strategically located around Myanmar help to boost outcomes for children, women and communities through strengthening government systems and services. The aim of this collaboration at regional/sub-national level is to support the delivering of sustainable results in the sectors of health, water and sanitation and child protection.

**CHIN STATE**

One of the smallest states in Myanmar, Chin State has a population of 478,000 of which nearly half are children.

In 2019 over 1,000 people fled fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army and are now living in three Internally Displaced Persons camps in Paletwa Township in southern Chin State.

The fighting, landmines and isolation are the biggest challenges for the people of Chin State, who receive assistance from the government and local groups. In Chin State UNICEF supports state and national development policies that address child deprivation and exclusion, helping to build core systems to deliver better outcomes.

**Key results:**

- Over 900 basic health staff completed the six-day training on community-based infant and young child feeding and protocols for integrated management of acute malnutrition.
- **3 new solar refrigerators** were installed and the installation of another 28 solar refrigerators is ongoing at regional health centres to serve hard-to-reach areas.
- **Big story book in nine Chin ethnic languages** developed and distributed to support early learning in mother tongue.
- Collaborating with the Department of Rural Development, UNICEF co-chaired the strengthening of the state-level WASH sector coordination mechanism.

**THE DRY ZONE**

Myanmar’s Dry Zone includes parts of Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions and is home to around five million children.

Chronic underdevelopment and poverty in remote, hard-to-reach rural communities of the Dry Zone result in poor outcomes for many children in health, education, water and sanitation, and child protection. Droughts and flash floods contribute to ongoing food insecurity.

UNICEF works in the large areas of deprivation in the Dry Zone to improve the lives of children by increasing access to basic services, building capacity and strengthening systems.

**Key results:**

- On **World Polio Day in Mandalay** about 2,000 community members and 800 people on bicycles participated, accompanied by mobile theatrical performances to raise awareness.
- **Expanded the Foster Care model**, based on the Foster Care Guidelines launched in February 2018, to new areas in Mandalay Region.
- **Community-led Total Sanitation sessions** were conducted in 1,231 villages in Magwe Region and Shan State by Basic Health Staff supported by UNICEF and local NGOs.
KACHIN STATE

Around 600,000 children, in a population of around 1.6 million people, live in Kachin State in northern Myanmar.

Conflict severely exacerbates Kachin State’s chronic underdevelopment, where nearly 30 per cent of the population lives under the poverty line. Since a unilateral ceasefire declared by the Myanmar military in December 2018, the situation in 2019 was calmer with no significant clashes resulting in further displacement. However over 107,000 people remained displaced and access to humanitarian support did not improve.

Illegal drugs, trafficking and landmines add to the vulnerabilities faced by many children in Kachin State.

UNICEF is supporting children and families throughout the state, in both government and non-government-controlled areas, with the aim to reach all children in immediate need, especially the most vulnerable.

**Key results:**

- More than 4,275 primary children in government-controlled areas received *essential learning packages and school kits* while 1,940 teachers and 968 members of parent-teacher associations were supported.
- With WFP, UNICEF started developing operational modalities to implement *Cash for WASH in Kachin State*.
- *Third-party monitoring* to reach hard-to-access and security-compromised areas was initiated by UNICEF.
RAKHINE STATE

Children are suffering devastating impacts amid the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State.

Conflict between the Myanmar Military and the Arakan Army has been ongoing since it flared up again in December 2018, particularly in the northern and central parts of the state.

UNICEF’s team in Rakhine State works out of offices in the state capital, Sittwe, and in Maungdaw in the north, near the border with Bangladesh. Through its Rakhine Response Plan, UNICEF aims to ensure that critical services in child protection, health and nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene and social protection are delivered where they are needed most.

The focusing on addressing longstanding as well as shifting patterns of needs facing the most vulnerable children. These are children living in the northern townships; children living in Internally Displaced Persons camps in the central townships; children affected by the recent outbreaks of armed conflict in the central and northern townships; and children living in communities in the central and southern areas.

**Key results:**
- 12,000 displaced people in Buthidaung and Rathedaung Townships received direct humanitarian assistance and UNICEF expanded its access to communities.
- 86,491 children and women in Rakhine State received health care services and 21,382 children aged six to 59 months received micronutrient supplementation.
- More than 42,151 children accessed pre-primary and primary learning opportunities.
- Psychosocial support and mine risk education training provided to 600 teachers in Rakhine State benefitting 64,000 children (30,434 girls) while 10,850 adolescents were provided with life skills training.
- Cold chain personnel trained, a sub-depot constructed in Sittwe, and a paper-based logistics management information system successfully piloted.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene services provided to over 50,000 people living in Internally Displaced Persons camps in central Rakhine State, and additional services provided to 21,000 other people displaced in 2019.

SHAN STATE

A large area covering 55 townships and five of Myanmar’s six designated self-administered areas controlled by ethnic minority groups, Shan State has the largest population of children in the country. Many live in remote, hard-to-reach areas and regions affected by the ongoing conflict between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed organizations.

Increasing conflict in northern Shan has led to further deterioration in humanitarian access.

UNICEF works in partnership with the Myanmar Government, civil society organisations, non-government organisations and ethnic health organisations to provide humanitarian support for people affected by the conflict, including the displaced. The focus is on building systems that can deliver long-term, sustainable results in health, education, water and sanitation, and child protection for children and their families.

**Key results:**
- The state-level Education Sector Working Group was launched led by the State Education Department and supported by UNICEF.
- UNICEF-supported interventions in Shan State were mapped, to identify areas for strengthening integrated early childhood care and development approaches.
THE SOUTHEAST

Encompassing Kayin, Kayah and Mon States, Tanintharyi Region, and parts of eastern Bago Region and eastern and southern Shan State, the Southeast is home to around 11.5 million people of different ethnic groups and cultures.

Parts of the Southeast have endured armed conflicts for decades. While ceasefires are currently in place, many areas are still heavily militarized, and landmines pose a constant danger.

Based in Hpa-An, the capital of Kayin State, UNICEF works across a large territory with complex challenges including limited infrastructure and difficult terrains, coming under separate administrations, as peace efforts continue.

Key results:

- In collaboration with the Government of Myanmar, emergency hygiene supplies were provided to the more than 16,000 people affected by floods and landslides in Kayin and Mon States in August 2019.
- A joint study on cash for WASH, part of a multipurpose cash response to flooding in the Southeast, was completed revealing opportunities to replace hygiene kits with cash alternatives, in some part of the country.
- UNICEF continued to maintain contingency supplies and long-term agreements with suppliers of response kits. Long-term agreements with contractors were made to support alternative ways of delivering sanitation responses.
- In response to the vaccine-driven polio outbreak in Hpa-pun township, Kayin State, where immunization coverage was below 40 per cent, UNICEF coordinated closely with the local ethnic health organization to support polio vaccinations in the non-government-controlled areas of the township. UNICEF and WHO also supported the Ministry of Health and Sports for an immediate outbreak response in surrounding townships, in which 300,000 children and more than 700,000 caregivers in 12 prioritized townships were reached with polio and immunization messages via multi-channel IEC materials.
UNICEF Myanmar’s ‘s advocacy agenda, spearheaded by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore’s visit to the country in January 2019, had a dual focus. The two areas of particular effort were to secure increased Government commitments for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Myanmar (including investment to meet the needs of every child); and placing special emphasis on those children left behind - the children affected by the conflicts in Rakhine State, Kachin State and northern Shan State.

**ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**

**Rakhine State:** During her visit to Myanmar, UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore met with the State Counsellor, H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. She emphasized the urgent need to grant agencies regular humanitarian access and to expand the coverage and quality of basic services for all children, including children in rural areas and those affected by conflict. When Henrietta Fore met the Minister of Defence, she urged that joint action plans be adopted to address the two new grave violations of children’s rights, for which the military was listed in the UN Secretary-General’s annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

In 2019 UNICEF Myanmar and Bangladesh Country Offices worked together to develop a joint strategy to advocate for Education for all children in Rakhine State in Myanmar, and Rohingya refugee children living in camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

**Children Affected by Armed Conflict:** UNICEF continued in its role as co-chair of the inter-agency Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, working with the various parties towards the goal of delisting grave violations. Some progress was made on the Children and Armed Conflict agenda, in particular the implementation of the joint action plan to end underage recruitment.

In partnership, UNICEF also started advocating and engaging the Ministry of Education to move towards Myanmar’s signing of the Safe Schools Declaration.

**The first 1,000 days:** UNICEF Myanmar finalized its Early Childhood Development Strategy Note to guide efforts towards strengthening an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development in the first 1,000 days. Mapping of UNICEF-supported interventions in Shan State was completed, to identify areas for strengthening integrated Early Childhood Development approaches.

**PARTNERSHIPS FOR ADVOCACY**

**Partnership with the Myanmar Parliaments:** Through a new partnership with Westminster Foundation for Democracy, briefings were delivered for Parliamentarians on the Child Rights Bill and the Basic Education Bill. A briefing was held with the Joint Public Accounts Committee as they scrutinized the 2019-20 Public Budget.

During the Parliamentary debate on the Child Rights Bill, extra effort was required to advocate on the contested areas of the bill, such as the right to birth registration, minimum age of marriage and protection of children against all forms of physical violence. UNICEF, together with the ILO, the EU and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, built a strong case, based on evidence, for maintaining the provisions, in the best interests of children.

Engaging the Women and Child Rights Parliamentary Committees enabled them to explore ways to hear the views of children, in a systematic manner.
**The voices of adolescents and youth:** The voices of adolescents and youth were mobilised through the U-Report social media platform, to better understand their views and experiences. The number of registered U-Reporters increased from 22,480 in December 2018 to 30,760 in December 2019. Throughout the year, 52 weekly polls on children’s rights, air pollution, the national budget, stress management and the inclusion of children with disabilities were issued. U-Reporters recruited from every state and region, including hard to reach areas, included young people working in garment factories in Ayeyarwaddy Region, young people living in Internally Displaced Persons camps in northern Shan State and young people from Rakhine State, through the Youth Affairs Committee and Student Union in Sittwe.

On 20 November 2019, 100 children and adolescents engaged with 300 decision-makers at a National Children’s Summit, presenting their ideas about the spaces that could be created to regularly share their views.

**National media partnerships:** In 2019, UNICEF Myanmar began actively reengaging with the local media in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, to build strategic partnerships, increase public awareness of UNICEF’s work and enhance UNICEF’s positive image. This resulted in extensive coverage of UNICEF’s first Op-Ed on the 2019-2020 budget, which called for increased investment in children.

Public engagement through digital and social media increased with the launch of the new UNICEF Myanmar website generating more than 126,000 website views and a robust social media strategy that led to an increase in UNICEF’s Facebook fan base from 70,239 in 2018 to 94,180 in 2019, with a peak during the CRC@30 Facebook photo competition in November 2019.

UNICEF led a 12-month advocacy and communication campaign to secure increased Government commitments for the implementation of the CRC in Myanmar and called for:

- Protection: the adoption and implementation of a new Child Rights Law that is aligned with the principles and provisions of the CRC
- Provision: increased investment of the public budget in every child, including those at risk of being left behind; and
- Participation: creation of spaces for children and adolescents to engage in the policy making process and raise the issues that matter to them

**Three specific policy wins were achieved through this campaign:**

a) A new Child Rights Law was enacted on 24 July 2019. In the new Law, all children born in Myanmar were guaranteed the fundamental and unconditional right to register at birth.

b) The 2019-2020 Union Budget Law provided a substantial scale-up in the volume of revenues and expenditure mobilized for public purposes, bringing total public expenditure to 31,919 billion kyat (approximately $21b) - close to a 30 per cent increase compared to the fiscal year of 2018-2019; and

c) At a National Children’s Summit on World Children’s Day, key decision makers committed to accelerate their efforts to increase the participation of children in matters affecting their lives.
Being fit for purpose

UNICEF Myanmar’s Country Programme Management Plan was revised extensively during 2019, with key changes including the planned shift of the country office from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw to facilitate closer working relations with government partners; improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF’s field office presence, and better matching of staff structure with the resource availability.

Although increased armed clashes restricted access, UNICEF significantly expanded its work in northern Rakhine State across all programmes and established additional positions to strengthen its sub-office in Maungdaw. UNICEF also hired a consultant to review programming in Rakhine State through a human rights lens and provide concrete guidance on how UNICEF can ensure its humanitarian and development programming can promote a human rights-based approach.

UNICEF Myanmar was the first UNICEF office in the East Asia and Pacific Region to initiate third party monitoring, covering hard-to-access and security-compromised areas, using an online data collection system, the Kobo Tool. The experience in Kachin State has been positive but there are challenges reaching communities in Rakhine due to travel restrictions, authorization and security issues. UNICEF is exploring alternate and innovative modalities, such as sub-contracting, reaching out through the local population, and using technology to gather data.

During 2019, UNICEF Myanmar utilised US$50.47 million, of which approximately US$12 million went directly to humanitarian response. Of the US$48 million revenue received, 30 per cent was in flexible regular resources received from UNICEF headquarters.

UNICEF Myanmar has 227 staff:

- **81% National**
- **59% Based in Yangon**
- **52.7% Female**
- **19% International**
- **41% Field location**
- **47.6% Male**

Delivering Results for Children 2019 - Programme of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and UNICEF
Cooperating to advance children’s rights

To improve children’s lives, UNICEF Myanmar has a five-year Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Myanmar (2018-22), and at the same time also engages with other partners including UN agencies, international and local NGOs, civil society and the private sector. In 2019, the annual programme expenditure of US$50.47 million, enabled UNICEF Myanmar to manage 73 strategic partnerships with 29 Government departments and 44 NGOs.

In collaboration with Government departments and ministries (particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health and Sports), NGO actors and UN agencies including UNFPA, ILO, IOM and UNWOMEN, great efforts have been made to strengthen the nexus of humanitarian and development interventions. This moves further towards ensuring a holistic and integrated system that provides protection services for all vulnerable children.

Productive partnerships with UN agencies, particularly in the area of child protection, included a five-year joint programme with UNFPA entitled ‘Health, Equality and Rights Myanmar’ focusing on gender-based violence and violence against children response and prevention, funded by the Government of Canada. With UNFPA and IOM, UNICEF Myanmar is partnering in a 12-month UN action on sexual violence in conflict.

UNICEF also became the chair of the Scaling Up Nutrition UN network, facilitating closer collaboration among UN agencies.

Finally, the positive results outlined in this report would not have been possible without the support of trusted resource partners that respect UNICEF’s capacity to deliver tangible results for the children of Myanmar and to advocate for their rights to access basic social services and protection regardless of race, sex, language, religion, ethnic origin, disability or birth status. For that we are most grateful.

The three main donors to UNICEF Myanmar in 2019 were the Government of Japan, National Committees and USAID/The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.
In 2019 UNICEF Myanmar’s programme was financed with support from:

Regular resources by contribution received globally, 2018
(in millions of US dollars)

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*2018 data